

us to come to this beautiful place and recommend all these changes, and these changes may well be beneficial to all the business people represented here from all the countries. But it doesn't mean that they can be made painlessly by political leaders when they go back home.

So I think one of the things I'd like to see all of you discuss is what you could do not only to put more pressure on the leaders here once a year but what you could do to provide more systematic support to the leaders who are prepared to make these tough decisions who live in the countries where the decisions are indeed difficult to make.

Yes.

#### **Next President and the Trade Agenda**

**Q.** [*Inaudible*]

**The President.** Well, without commenting on what kind of leadership we will have in the other countries, which I think is inappropriate for me to comment on and also not possible to predict, one of the things that both Vice President Gore and Governor Bush agreed on in this election is that the United States should continue its strong leadership for a more integrated global economy and for expanded trade. And as nearly as I could tell, there was virtually no disagreement on that, except that there were disagreements about the extent to which we also ought to push the trade-plus agenda, if you will, that I've been talking about for the last several years. But on the question of leadership for trade, I think the world can rest easy because both our candidates made strong commitments to do that.

Yes, sir.

#### **Post-Presidential Plans**

**Q.** [*Inaudible*]*—*NAFTA and trade relations with China, but I have a question to ask you. You're still young, articulate, intelligent, and the President of the United States. What do you do now? [*Laughter*]

**The President.** Well, now I have a United States Senator to support. I understand that's an expensive proposition. [*Laughter*] I don't know.

Let me just say that the important thing for a former President, it seems to me, is to find a way to be a useful citizen of both

my country and the world and to continue to pursue the things that I think are most important to making the world a better place but to do it in a way that does not get in the way of my successor.

The United States can only have one President at a time, and it's very important to me that I continue to be active in the things that I care about—many of which I was talking about here today—in a way that is respectful of the fact that the country has a new President, and the people need to bond with the new President, and the new President needs to establish his relationships and role in the world.

But I think I can find a way to do that. So I'll be around. But I also have to support a Senator, and I'm going to do my best to do that, as well.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Ballroom at the Empire Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Hamdillah Ha Wahab, chairman, APEC-CEO Summit 2000; Prince Abdul Qawi of Brunei; U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Sylvia Stanfield; Sy Sternberg, Paul Y. Song, and Ernest S. Micek, U.S. members, APEC Business Advisory Council; President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush.

#### **Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Bandar Seri Begawan**

*November 15, 2000*

#### **2000 Presidential Election**

**Q.** President Clinton, any comment on the U.S. election?

**President Clinton.** Yes, let him talk about it. [*Laughter*]

**President Putin.** We're interested, but with respect to the feelings of the American people, are waiting for the outcomes.

#### **Russia-U.S. Relations**

[*At this point, a question was asked in Russian, and a translation was not provided.*]

**President Putin.** President Clinton, during the term of his Presidency, has caused a breakthrough in the U.S.-Russian relations.

And we expect this torch to be given to whoever will be the successor.

### **2000 Presidential Election**

**Q.** Mr. President, how are you going to explain what's going on back home to Mr. Putin and other foreign leaders?

**President Clinton.** Well, I think it's pretty clear that no one knows yet who won the election. There are recounts in progress, and there will be a full accounting according to an accepted legal process in America. We have plenty of time. There's nothing to worry about.

I think other leaders should have the same reaction the American people have about it. I think they are pretty relaxed about it now. They're going to let the process play out. Both sides are certainly very well represented, and they'll argue their points, and we'll see how it works.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. at the Assara Guest House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

### **Statement on Ratification of the Convention To Combat Desertification**

*November 15, 2000*

On November 13 I signed the instrument of ratification for the Convention To Combat Desertification. Degradation of dry lands affects hundreds of millions of people around the world, especially in Africa. The Convention will help countries marshal the resources needed to mitigate the effects of desertification. It will enhance the effectiveness of foreign assistance and promote a strong role for nongovernmental organizations. Finally, it properly places affected local communities at the heart of international efforts to meet this critical challenge. I look forward to working with our partners in Africa and around the world to implement this innovative international agreement. I commend the Senate for its approval of this important treaty.

### **Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea in Bandar Seri Begawan**

*November 15, 2000*

### **2000 Presidential Election**

**Q.** Have any of the leaders asked you about the election results, sir?

**President Clinton.** Just briefly.

**Q.** Did they accept your explanation of what's going on?

**President Clinton.** No, they were just interested in it. I told them it would all be worked out. The process was underway.

### **Possible Visit to North Korea**

**Q.** Mr. President, what exactly are you waiting for from the North Koreans, in terms of commitments on their missile program? What do you need to hear from them?

**President Clinton.** Well, we're working on a number of issues, of which the missile program is one. We're obviously trying to make as much progress as we can, and I'll make an appropriate decision about the trip sometime in the not too distant future.

**Q.** Sir, do you think it would be helpful to bring the South Koreans' President with you if you make a trip?

**President Clinton.** Well, I don't—he just went, and he deserves a lot of credit for doing it. I was actually quite thrilled, as I've told him several times, that the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to him for a lifetime of devotion to peace and human rights, and especially for the breakthrough he's achieved here.

So I think he's put this whole business on a different footing. Secretary Albright, as you know, had a very good trip to North Korea. So I think we're going to work together. We've always worked in partnership with South Korea, and we will continue to do so.

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:42 p.m. at the Istana Edinburgh Guest House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.